

VZCZCXRO7181
PP RUEHFK RUEHKS0 RUEHNAG RUEHNH
DE RUEHKO #3419/01 3510823
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 160823Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9481
INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/USDOJ WASHDC PRIORITY
RULSDMK/USDOT WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J5//
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHHMHBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CC/PA//
RHMFIUU/USFJ //J5/JO21//
RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA
RUAYJAA/CTF 72
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 3811
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 1454
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 5245
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 9427
RUEHKS0/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 2020
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6849
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 2850
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2949

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 12 TOKYO 003419

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR E, P, EB, EAP/J, EAP/P, EAP/PD, PA;
WHITE HOUSE/NSC/NEC; JUSTICE FOR STU CHEMTOB IN ANTI-TRUST DIVISION;
TREASURY/OASIA/IMI/JAPAN; DEPT PASS USTR/PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
SECDEF FOR JCS-J-5/JAPAN,
DASD/ISA/EAPR/JAPAN; DEPT PASS ELECTRONICALLY TO USDA
FAS/ITP FOR SCHROETER; PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR;
CINCPAC FLT/PA/ COMNAVFORJAPAN/PA.

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 12/16/08

INDEX:

- (1) U.S. State Department Japan Desk director hopes to see Japan send civilians to Afghanistan (Asahi)
- (2) Editorial: ASDF pullout from Iraq: Thorough probe a political responsibility (Tokyo Shimbun)
- (3) Prime Minister Aso's comment on WTO Doha Round (Prime Minister's Official Residence Home page)
- (4) Editorial: WTO agreement before year's end dropped (Sankei)
- (5) Rift between Machimura and Nakagawa might split the largest LDP faction in two (Yomiuri)
- (6) DPJ to launch offensive with employment bills (Mainichi)
- (7) Poll on Aso cabinet, political parties (Tokyo Shimbun)
- (8) Poll: LDP prefectural chapters distancing themselves from Aso, only 60 PERCENT have hopes for him (Mainichi)
- (9) TOP HEADLINES
- (10) EDITORIALS
- (11) Prime Minister's schedule, December 14 & 15 (Nikkei)

ARTICLES:

- (1) U.S. State Department Japan Desk director hopes to see Japan

send civilians to Afghanistan

ASAHI (Internet edition) (Full)
December 16, 2008

Yoshiyuki Komurata in Washington

At a press conference on Dec. 15, U.S. State Department Japan Country Director Russel expressed his hope that Japan would dispatch civilians to assist Afghanistan. "Although it has been said there should be 'boots on the ground', there are many different kind of boots that can participate in assisting Afghanistan," he said.

Russel praised Japan's contributions, such as the Self-Defense Forces' refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. He also gave specific examples of civilian dispatches, saying, "Although there are military boots, there are also those of architects, educators, nurses, and administrators." He indicated that such specialists were being sought at the local level, and he expressed his view that there should be talks with the Japanese government along such lines.

(2) Editorial: ASDF pullout from Iraq: Thorough probe a political responsibility

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 5) (Full)
December 16, 2008

Winding up its activities in Iraq, the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) has begun withdrawing from the country. There are many unclear

TOKYO 00003419 002 OF 012

points in the actual situation of the Self-Defense Forces' five years of missions in the battlefield, including past developments. A thorough probe is necessary. The abdication of responsibility by clearly cowardly lawmakers is not permissible.

Following the attacks on Iraq by the United States and Britain in 2003, the then Koizumi administration decided to send SDF troops for the first time to a battlefield that is in a state of hostilities. The SDF has completed its mission in the severe life-threatening environment without any member having been sacrificed.

The Ground Self-Defense Force and ASDF began their activities in 2004. Even after the withdrawal in 2006 of the GSDF, which had conducted water-supply activities and road restoration work, the ASDF continued airlifting multinational force troops and relief supplies. Based on improved security conditions and other factors in Iraq, the government has concluded that (the SDF) has achieved its objective of humanitarian and reconstruction assistance.

Nevertheless, there is a strong impression that the SDF conducted activities to support the U.S. military. In particular, the ASDF made 821 flights to airlift 46,500 persons and 673 tons of supplies. Although the details are unclear, a large part of the duty is believed to be the airlifting of U.S. troops and U.S. military supplies. The ASDF aircrafts were reportedly called "taxis" by the U.S. military. Did such activities deserve to be called international contributions?

(In April), the Nagoya High Court ruled the ASDF mission unconstitutional. If the government is to praise (the ASDF mission) as having won high marks from the international community, it should clarify its activities that were unclear to the public and check consistency with the Constitution at the Diet.

The Japanese government's support for attacks on Iraq has not been summed up, either. Even President George W. Bush described the failure to find weapons of mass destruction, the factor he cited in launching the war, as his "biggest regret." It is absurd that despite that, the government continues taking the hardened attitude, saying its decision to support (the attacks on Iraq) was correct. It is imperative for the government to fulfill its accountability by scrutinizing how it arrived at that policy course.

The focus of the war on terror is certain to shift from Iraq to

Afghanistan where the security situation has markedly deteriorated.

Late last week, the ruling camp bulldozed through the House of Representatives a bill extending the refueling mission in the Indian Ocean with an overriding vote. The incoming Obama administration, which has made it clear to shift the focus to Afghanistan, is expected to strongly press Japan for additional human contributions, including (an SDF) dispatch to Afghanistan, as well as for financial assistance.

The government must not decide on the next contributions in a flurry. It must come up with a solid set of diplomatic guidelines suitable for Japan, a peaceful nation, without giving priority to military affairs. To begin with, it is the challenge that must be addressed by a full-fledged administration reflecting the popular will. The country is being pressed to pick up the hefty tabs for the political vacuum that has been created under the Aso administration, which is becoming weaker under the divided Diet.

TOKYO 00003419 003 OF 012

(3) Prime Minister Aso's comment on WTO Doha Round

Prime Minister's Official Residence Home Page
December 15, 2008

¶1. In the Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy and the APEC Summit held earlier, strong statements were issued regarding the WTO Doha Round trade talks. Despite these statements, a ministerial meeting has been put off and a modalities agreement is unlikely to be reached by the end of this year. That is regrettable.

¶2. Given the current serious economic situation, it is necessary to grow the global economy through expanded trade. Our nation will continue to persistently make efforts to bring about an agreement in the Doha Round at an early date. In the agricultural sector, on which various discussions were conducted in past negotiations, Japan will continue to strengthen its domestic industry.

¶3. In an effort to resist moves for protectionism, our nation is determined to strongly call on the WTO member nations at its meetings to refrain from introducing new barriers in the trade and investment areas, including export restrictions.

(4) Editorial: WTO agreement before year's end dropped

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
December 16, 2008

The new multilateral trade talks (Doha Round) sponsored by the World Trade Organization (WTO) deadlocked in July this year. Though a mood for clinching a deal at an early date was mounting following the spreading financial crisis, member countries failed to find a breakthrough in the stalemate and had to give up the goal of reaching an agreement before year's end.

Since an agreement in the trade liberalization talks under the WTO had been expected to undergird the global economy, the condition of which has been worsened by the financial crisis, it is extremely regrettable that member countries had to give up the goal of reaching an agreement before year's end.

In particular, we fear various countries will now strengthen protectionist moves, including imposing import restrictions, in an attempt to protect their domestic industries and employment. It is clear from the history of the Great Depression that protectionism will in the end up shrinking trade and worsening the global economy.

Aware of the potential danger of protectionism, leaders from 20 leading economies at the financial summit vowed to make effort to reach a framework agreement at the WTO talks before year's end. The statement issued by participants in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC) even noted that they would pledge to reach an agreement before the end of the year.

Nevertheless, they failed to reach an agreement, which underscores the difficulty of the multilateral trade talks. The failure also exposed how light and insufficient has been the political will of the countries in the world. Added to this, the financial and economic crisis that shows no signs of slackening, are major causes

TOKYO 00003419 004 OF 012

for concern.

Talks carried out under the past rounds have been led by industrialized countries. But in the current Doha Round, it is said, such emerging countries as India, China and Brazil are playing leading roles.

The major cause of the collapse of the WTO talks in July was apparently the confrontation between the U.S., and India and other emerging countries over conditions for special emergency product import restrictions (safeguards) on agricultural products granted to developing countries. Developing countries, including China, put up strong opposition in the talks to lower sector-specific tariffs on mined and manufactured products.

It appears unavoidable that the environment surrounding the trade talks will become even more severe due to the worsening economy. Pressure on politics from industrial circles, centered on agricultural organizations, is increasing in various countries, including Japan. It is another cause of concern that the U.S. will not be ready for the resumption of the talks in early 2009 due to the change of government.

The more the trade talks become protracted, the more the global economy will suffer from the negative impact. We should consider the overall benefits, while properly dealing with specific sacrifices.

(5) Rift between Machimura and Nakagawa might split the largest LDP faction in two

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
December 14, 2008

The largest Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) faction, headed by former Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura, is now becoming unstable. The rift between Machimura and former LDP Secretary General Hidenao Nakagawa might break up the faction in the future, intertwined with a controversy within the faction over whether it should support Prime Minister Taro Aso or distance itself from him. Machimura and Nakagawa are well-known rivals.

In a general meeting on Dec. 11 of the Machimura faction, tension rose between Machimura and Nakagawa at a time when Nakagawa suddenly interrupted Machimura, who was speaking against hiking the tax on cigarettes. With a look of irritation on his face, Nakagawa said: "About 60 PERCENT of the public support an increase in the cigarette tax."

Machimura has made it clear that he supports Aso, aiming to deepen his relationship with former Prime Ministers Yoshiro Mori and Shinzo Abe, who are prominent figures in the faction. Machimura intends to strengthen his support base within the party by stepping up cooperation with Mori and Abe. He visited the Prime Minister's Official Residence on Dec. 9 and reportedly gave Aso words of encouragement, saying: "It is important to implement the Prime Minister's policies in the next fiscal year's budget."

As there have been reports of Machimura having frequent contacts with Mori and Abe, some lawmakers suspect that Machimura has his eye on the next administration after Aso, with one lawmaker saying: "Mr. Machimura is preparing to run in the next party leadership race to succeed Mr. Aso."

TOKYO 00003419 005 OF 012

Meanwhile, Nakagawa hosted a meeting on Dec. 9 of a group of LDP

lawmakers calling for the maintenance and promotion of postal privatization and a preparatory meeting on Dec. 11 to establish a study group on the daily lives of the people. Twenty-five of the 63 LDP members, who took part in the Dec. 9 meeting, and 26 of the 57 LDP members, who attended the Dec. 11 meeting, were members of the Machimura faction. The figures show that Nakagawa has strong influence on junior and mid-level lawmakers of the Machimura faction.

Observers view that the establishment of the two groups is a preparatory step for a political arrangement after the Aso administration. Nakagawa's relationship with Aso does not look good. According to sources, business leaders mediated between Nakagawa and Aso with the aim of arranging a meeting between the two on Dec. 12, but it was later cancelled.

Nakagawa used to be a close aide of Mori, but their relationship has deteriorated rapidly. Although Machimura was invited to a party hosted by Mori held on Dec. 10 in Tokyo for the second in a row, Nakagawa, who was invited to the party last year, was not seen at the party this year.

Concerned that the confrontation between Machimura and Nakagawa will intensify, Abe joined Nakagawa-hosted study session in an effort to fix their relationship. However, many faction members are worried that the confrontation between the two might break the faction in two.

(6) DPJ to launch offensive with employment bills

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
December 13, 2008

President Ichiro Ozawa and other executive members of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) met yesterday and discuss what approach the party should take in the remaining days of the Diet session. The job market has worsened, as seen from increasing cases of companies cancelling job offers or dismissing temporary employees. To improve the situation, the party will submit bills aimed to boost the job market to the ongoing session on Dec. 15, with the aim of having the bills passed before the session ends on the 25th. The party intends to call on the ruling coalition for its cooperation in enacting the bills, while emphasizing that employment promotion is a common challenge for the ruling and opposition camps. If the ruling parties refuse to respond to the call, the DPJ will try to break the impasse by arranging talks between Ozawa and Prime Minister Taro Aso.

Ozawa expressed his eagerness in the executive meeting to enact the employment bill, saying: "I will have to urge the prime minister to approve the bills when the time comes, because negotiations will not easily move forward." Other participants took Ozawa's remark as expressing his readiness to hold another party head meeting.

The employment bill is one of the six bills proposed in the DPJ's package of economic and fiscal measures as counterproposals to the fiscal 2008 second supplementary budget bill. The party submitted four bills, including a bill to support child rearing, to the House of Councillors on Dec. 11, but the executive meeting defined the employment bill as the top priority bill in the current Diet session.

TOKYO 00003419 006 OF 012

Although the government has decided to delay the submission of the second extra budget bill to the next ordinary Diet session, the DPJ will submit the employment bill during the current session. Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Kenji Yamaoka said, "We are determined to enact the bill, even by forcing a vote." In a meeting held by three opposition parties' Diet Affairs Committee chairmen after the executive meeting, Yamaoka called on the Japanese Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the People's New Party to jointly work to pass the employment bill. The bill is expected to be submitted jointly by these three opposition parties.

The bills related to employment include these five key elements: (1) Restrictions on job offer withdrawals; (2) expanding the scope of

employment adjustment subsidies to cover non-regular workers: Special measures bill related to the prevention of the termination of contracts for dispatch workers; (3) accommodation and welfare support for former dispatch workers searching for employment: Bill to provide accommodation and welfare payments for such individuals together with work training and job introductions; (4) improvement in the employment insurance system, such as reducing the minimum insured period required to receive benefits; and (5) clearer rules on limited-term labor contracts.

In a press conference yesterday, Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama expressed opposition to the fixed-amount cash handout scheme included in the second extra budget bill. He then called on the ruling camp for its cooperation, saying: "The government should perceive that the job-creation issue is an imminent task. Our bill should be enacted first of all."

(7) Poll on Aso cabinet, political parties

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
December 8, 2008

Questions & Answers

(Figures shown in percentage. Parentheses denote the results of the last survey conducted Nov. 8-9.)

Q: Do you support the Aso cabinet?

Yes 25.5 (40.9)

No 61.3 (42.2)

Don't know (D/K) + no answer (N/A) 13.2 (16.9)

Q: (Only for those who answered "yes" to the previous question)

What's the primary reason for your approval of the Aso cabinet? Pick only one from among those listed below.

The prime minister is trustworthy 15.7 (13.5)

Because it's a coalition cabinet of the Liberal Democratic Party and the New Komeito 9.6 (6.7)

The prime minister has leadership ability 1.6 (10.1)

Something can be expected of its economic policies 4.9 (13.3)

Something can be expected of its foreign policies 3.5 (6.9)

Something can be expected of its political reforms 3.5 (5.7)

Something can be expected of its tax reforms 6.4 (5.3)

Something can be expected of its administrative reforms 2.6 (1.9)

There's no other appropriate person (for prime minister) 49.2 (35.1)

Other answers (O/A) 2.0 (0.7)

TOKYO 00003419 007 OF 012

D/K+N/A 1.0 (0.8)

Q: (Only for those who answered "no" to the first question) What's the primary reason for your disapproval of the Aso cabinet? Pick only one from among those listed below.

The prime minister is untrustworthy 19.8 (10.0)

Because it's a coalition cabinet of the Liberal Democratic Party and the New Komeito 4.5 (14.5)

The prime minister lacks leadership ability 18.7 (6.5)

Nothing can be expected of its economic policies 28.3 (27.9)

Nothing can be expected of its foreign policies 1.4 (1.3)

Nothing can be expected of its political reforms 6.5 (11.3)

Nothing can be expected of its tax reforms 2.4 (7.7)

Nothing can be expected of its administrative reforms 5.2 (7.8)

Don't like the prime minister's personal character 11.1 (10.1)

O/A 0.3 (0.9)

D/K+N/A 1.8 (2.0)

Q: Prime Minister Taro Aso has decided to present a second supplementary budget to the Diet at its ordinary session next year, not at its current extraordinary session. This budget is for economic stimulus measures, including a plan to hand out cash benefits totaling 2 trillion yen. Do you think it is appropriate to present the extra budget to the Diet at its ordinary session to be

convened early next year?

Yes 26.0
No 55.7
D/K+N/A 18.3

Q: The government and the ruling coalition will increase spending on public investments and social security programs unlike before and will change the Koizumi cabinet's fiscal reconstruction policy. Do you support this policy changeover?

Yes 56.9
No 28.3
D/K+N/A 14.8

Q: There are calls from within the ruling and opposition parties for freezing the Koizumi cabinet's decision to sell the government's stocks in Japan Post in order to maintain the integrated management of the JP group's four constituent companies or reviewing the JP privatization plan. Do you support the idea of reviewing this JP privatization plan?

Yes 52.3
No 32.5
D/K+N/A 15.2

Q: The House of Representatives' current term is up until September next year. When would you like the House of Representatives to be dissolved for a general election?

Late this year after the budget for next fiscal year is compiled 22.1 (21.2)
At the beginning of the ordinary Diet session to be called in January next year 23.7 (17.9)
Around April after the budget for next fiscal year is approved in

TOKYO 00003419 008 OF 012

the Diet 19.7 (18.6)
Around June next year when the ordinary Diet session ends 6.3 (7.4)
Wait until the current term expires in September next year without dissolving the Diet 16.2 (24.3)
D/K+N/A 10.0 (10.6)

Q: Would you like the present LDP-led coalition government to continue, or would you otherwise like it to be replaced with a DPJ-led coalition government?

LDP-led coalition government 33.1 (36.1)
DPJ-led coalition government 45.4 (43.2)
D/K+N/A 21.5 (20.7)

Q: Which political party are you going to vote for in the next House of Representatives election in your proportional representation bloc?

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) 27.4 (33.6)
Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) 38.3 (35.5)
New Komeito (NK) 3.9 (3.8)
Japanese Communist Party (JCP) 4.9 (4.1)
Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto) 2.1 (1.8)
People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto) 0.6 (0.2)
Reform Club (RC or Kaikaku Kurabu) 0.1 (---)
New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon) --- (0.2)
Other political parties, groups --- (---)
D/K+N/A 22.7 (20.8)

Q: When comparing Prime Minister Taro Aso and DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa, which one do you think is more appropriate for prime minister?

Taro Aso 33.5 (51.0)
Ichiro Ozawa 34.5 (24.4)
D/K+N/A 32.0 (24.6)

Q: (Only for those who gave "Taro Aso") What is the primary reason

for your choice of Prime Minister Aso? Pick only one.

Because he's trustworthy 12.1
Because he's with the LDP 30.5
Because he has leadership ability 5.6
Because something can be expected of his policies 13.8
Because he's appropriate as Japan's leader 14.7
O/A 12.5
D/K+N/A 10.8

Q: (Only for those who gave "Ichiro Ozawa") What is the primary reason for your choice of DPJ President Ozawa? Pick only one.

Because he's trustworthy 5.5
Because he's with the DPJ 24.2
Because he has leadership ability 20.8
Because something can be expected of his policies 32.3
Because he's appropriate as Japan's leader 5.5
O/A 7.5
D/K+N/A 4.2

Q: Which political party do you support?

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) 28.9 (33.8)

TOKYO 00003419 009 OF 012

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) 28.7 (26.5)
New Komeito (NK) 3.3 (3.5)
Japanese Communist Party (JCP) 4.9 (2.5)
Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto) 1.9 (3.0)
People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto) 0.3 (0.5)
Reform Club (RC or Kaikaku Kurabu) 0.1 (---)
New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon) --- (0.1)
Other political parties, groups --- (0.1)
None 30.4 (28.1)
D/K+N/A 1.5 (1.9)

Polling methodology: The survey was conducted Dec. 6-7 across the nation by Kyodo News Service on a computer-aided random digit dialing (RDD) basis. Among randomly generated telephone numbers, those actually for household use with one or more eligible voters totaled 1,474. Answers were obtained from 1,023 persons.

(8) Poll: LDP prefectural chapters distancing themselves from Aso, only 60 PERCENT have hopes for him

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
December 14, 2008

The Mainichi Shimbun asked the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) prefectural chapters whether they expected Prime Minister Taro Aso to lead the LDP in the next general election for the House of Representatives. About 40 PERCENT or 18 chapters answered that they could not rely on Aso or gave no answer. Aso won the LDP presidential election in last September, obtaining 95 PERCENT of the prefectural chapters' votes, but the survey pointed out that the number of LDP's regional organizations distancing themselves from Aso is increasing.

The secretaries general of the LDP prefectural chapters were surveyed on Dec. 12-13. In Yamagata, Ibaraki and Tokyo, general affairs council chairmen responded to the questions.

A total of 29 chapters said they could place their expectations on Aso and seven chapters said they could not, while 11 chapters could not say. Some of the 11 chapters refrained from giving their answers, citing that there was no candidate to succeed Aso.

Of the 29 chapters that answered that they could place their expectations on Aso, 12 put forward Aso's economic policy as a reason for their judgment, while three chapters gave negative support for Aso, such as the Wakayama chapter that said: "Public confidence can never be regained if the prime minister keeps changing." "If the LDP replaces the president now, it will be severely attacked by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ)," answered the Aichi prefecture chapter. Of the seven chapters, which replied

that they did not want to see Aso lead the LDP in the election, four pointed out his inability to keep his mouth shut, including his gaffes, as a reason for their answer. These seven chapters said that Aso should boost his administration's popularity by compiling a state budget for fiscal 2009, but no chapter said that Aso should shuffle his cabinet or an LDP presidential election should be held.

Meanwhile, 33 prefectural chapters or 70 PERCENT said that next spring after the compilation of FY2009 state budget would be most desirable for Lower House dissolution. Nine chapters replied that it would be unnecessary to wait Lower House dissolution by the end of

TOKYO 00003419 010 OF 012

the terms of the incumbent Lower House members. Three chapters said that the Lower House should be dissolved around next summer. There was no answer that the lower chamber should be dissolved immediately or at the beginning of the ordinary Diet session in January. The survey showed that many LDP prefectural chapters were concerned about the next Lower House election.

(9) TOP HEADLINES

Asahi:
Education ministry panel seeks enhancement of Japanese-language ability

Mainichi:
Fundamental balance 13 trillion yen in red; General account to reach 88 trillion yen level in fiscal 2009

Yomiuri:
Panel to propose banning mobile phones at elementary, junior high schools

Nikkei:
Toyota to seek steel sheet price cuts for FY 2009 for first time in 7 years

Sankei and Tokyo Shimbun:
ASDF Iraq pullout begins

Akahata:
JCP's Nihi calls for emergency guarantee for small companies in all industrial sectors

(10) EDITORIALS

Asahi:
(1) New Thai prime minister: Dialogue with public essential
(2) Stemming global warming: There is way to benefiting North and South

Mainichi:
(1) BOJ's Tankan report: Companies overly pessimistic
(2) COP14 closes: Striking balance between environment and economy possible

Yomiuri:
(1) Economy's downhill slide picking up speed
(2) New antiterrorism law enacted: What should follow refueling mission must be considered

Nikkei:
(1) Sharp economic downturn requires speedy policies
(2) Tough challenges postponed at Poznan COP 14

Sankei:
(1) Emissions trading: System allowing Japan to compete with EU essential
(2) No WTO meeting this year: Do not be afraid of rise of protectionism

Tokyo Shimbun:
(1) ASDF Iraq pullout: Political probe must follow
(2) COP14 must move forward

Akahata:

(1) Japan, China, South Korea and ASEAN: Greater peace and cooperation in East Asia called for

(11) Prime Minister's schedule, December 14 & 15

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
December 16, 2008

December 14

07:50

Met with Cabinet Special Advisor Sueyoshi at the Hotel Nikko Fukuoka in Fukuoka City.

08:00

Met with Liberal Democratic Party Fukuoka Chapter Chairman Shingu, followed by Fukuoka Medical Association Chairman Yokokura.

09:32

Visited Kita-Kyushu City's Eco Town Center, Japan Environmental Safety Center Corp.'s Kita-Kyushu Facility, Shirashima pavilion, and wind power station.

10:38

Met Kenichi Iwamura, managing chairman of school aimed at lifetime active service; and Noriaki Seki, NPO representative at Higashida Eco Club House.

12:09

Met with his local supporters at Rihga Royal Hotel Kokura.

13:19

Attended 2008 International Seminar on Environment Model Urban Cities

15:30

Left Fukuoka on a government airplane.

16:50

Arrived at Haneda Airport.

17:27

Met with deputy chief cabinet secretaries Matsumoto and Konoike at the Okura Hotel. Konoike remained.

21:15

Returned to his private residence in Kamiyama-cho.

December 15

08:23

Met at Kantei with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Konoike.

08:56

Met with Environment Minister Saito and Finance Minister Nakagawa in the Diet.

09:00

Attended an Upper House Audit Committee session.

12:03

TOKYO 00003419 012 OF 012

Returned to Kantei.

12:58

Met with METI Minister Nikai in the Diet.

13:00

Attended an Upper House Audit Committee session.

17:07

Attended an LDP executive meeting.

17:57

Met at Kantei with Economic and Fiscal Policy Minister Yosano.

18:54

Dined with Toyota Motor Chairman Fujio Cho, Nippon Steel Chairman Akio Mimura, Kikkoman Chairman Yuzaburo Mogi, Administrative Reform Minister Amari, Consumer Affairs Minister Noda, former Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura, and former Environment Minister Suzuki, later joined by Nakagawa and former Land, Infrastructure and Transport Minister Tanigaki.

21:14

Met with his secretary.

23:23

Returned to his private residence.

SCHIEFFER